

ONLY SOCIALISM CAN DESTROY FASCISM

LABOR POWER

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War, Socialist Party, Norman Thomas

The Lend-Lease - Dictatorship Bill

Is British Imperialism "Lesser" Evil?

There Must Be No Halt!

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There Must Be No Halt!

January 10, 1941.

Dear Comrade,

It has been my custom for many years to review the developments of the preceding year in politics, in the industrial arena and the social realm, and then to reexamine the principles and tactics of Socialism in the light of those developments. By this procedure I try to keep my theory in line with existing conditions and to prevent my becoming ingrown and repeating trite phrases once applicable to past events as the answers to new situations.

Because I maintained this critical attitude, I entered enthusiastically into the launching of the Socialist Union Party. I hoped that with a new movement unencumbered by the ghosts of the past, with a revolutionary program and a realist attitude, we might lay the foundation for a genuine revolutionary Socialist movement which would gradually gain strength and in a reasonable time become a factor in influencing the fundamental change from capitalism to the Socialist Industrial Republic.

REACTION IN THE SADDLE

But before our group had the time to organize its forces and begin its work, a period of reaction set in throughout the country, followed immediately by the outbreak of the Second World War; factors which severely complicated the herculean task then already facing us.

During the 27 years I have been affiliated with our movement, it has had its "ups" and "downs," but through all its oscillations there was clearly discernable a steadily rising trend in the number of members and sympathizers and in its general influence on the working class and society.

Now all this has changed. Never since I first entered the movement to build a Socialist society of peace, order and plenty out of capitalism's anarchy, warfare and progressive pauperization of the masses has the movement been at so low an ebb as today in membership, influence and activity. Not only have we suffered a general exodus of members and the loss of the overwhelming portion of our sympathizers but the workers generally are less receptive, if not more openly antagonistic, to revolutionary teachings than ever before.

Daily the United States drifts nearer to involvement in the war. Whoever questions that this is the best of all possible worlds is branded as a "Red" or a "Nazi" and regarded with suspicion. Violations of the fundamental rights of free speech, press and assembly grow in frequency. The right to strike, threatened periodically with suppression for years, is now in real danger as a group of Congressmen press the issue under the specious plea of "National Defense." All along the line the forces of reaction mobilize for an attack on labor and its vanguard, the revolutionary movement. The government ignores all the anti-labor acts, while its spokesmen bombastically prate of the "democracy" which exists here, and which they will "defend" to the last drop of the workers' blood.

The powerful means of capitalist propaganda—the press, radio and pulpit—pouring a daily ration of poison into the minds of the workers have had their deadly effect.

SHALL WE QUIT?

The workers of this country know of the excesses committed by the Nazi regime — the brutal dictatorship, the destruction of trade unionism, the suppression of all civil rights, and the enslavement of the workers of Germany. Naturally they have come to loathe the political and economic system in the totalitarian countries where these things flourish. By constant insidious association of the crimes of the Nazi regime with the term "National Socialism," capitalist propaganda agencies have succeeded in inculcating in the minds of the workers here the false idea that Socialism is synonymous with Nazism's despotism and slavery. As further proof of the correctness of this contention, they point to the similarity between the political and economic systems of Nazi Germany and "Communist" or "Socialist" Russia, with their identical tyranny and suppression of the workers. The Hitler-Stalin pact served only to help capitalism's agents convince the American workers that Socialism or Communism in any form is merely a 20th Century reign of terror.

Small wonder, then, that the average worker here, in the face of continuous propaganda

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Editorials . . .

SHALL LABOR POWER CONTINUE ON?

The continued publication of **LABOR POWER** in the past has been a tribute to the never-failing generosity and loyalty of a small band of supporters who have contributed more than generously out of limited means. But even the deepest well finally runs dry. We have now reached a point where, to insure the continued publication of **LABOR POWER**, it is necessary to appeal to our readers and friends for financial assistance.

Whether or not **LABOR POWER** fulfills a necessary function in the field of revolutionary journalism and deserves to carry on, we shall leave to our readers to decide by the volume of their financial support. Every dollar bill, half-dollar, quarter, dime or nickel you can spare will aid us to maintain regular publication. Send in your contribution without delay.

Those of our readers who are not subscribers, or who have permitted their subscriptions to lapse can do their bit by sending in a year's subscription accompanied by 50 cents. If every reader were to do this we would receive quite a sizable financial boost to start with.

If you believe that **LABOR POWER** deserves to live on, don't say it with flowers only. Send in your contributions and subscriptions to build up its publication fund. Send for collection lists and solicit contributions from fellow workers. Act now before it is too late!

LABOR POWER
140 Fourth Avenue
Brooklyn, N. Y.

THE LEND-LEASE BILL

The most drastic and far-reaching measure ever to be proposed in the United States in peace time has been occupying the center of the political stage in Washington and throughout the country for the past weeks. The Lend-Lease Bill, as it is popularly known, embodies in legal formulations the plans of the Roosevelt Administration for all-out aid to Great Britain.

The introduction of this bill is striking confirmation of the contention which has repeatedly been expressed in the columns of **LABOR POWER** that for all practical purposes the United States is now actually at war with Germany. To be sure, formally the nation is still at peace, and all the diplomatic amenities are being observed with meticulous precision. Nevertheless, except for the dispatch of an army to Europe, the Administration's every act has been designed to obtain the defeat of the Axis and the victory of the Allies.

Nor is the sending of an armed force at all essential, or for that matter even desirable, at the present time. Military participation is purely a question of strategy. Modern warfare is principally a conflict of economics, a struggle which will be won in the long run by the nation which can produce or obtain the most arms, munitions, food, oil, gas and other military necessities. The United States at the present time confines its participation as an ally of Britain to acting as its chief base of supplies and munitions. The dispatch of a huge expeditionary force under prevailing conditions would not aid, and might conceivably hinder the British.

The provisions of the Lend-Lease Bill set up a virtual dictatorship over the entire American economy to be ruled by President Roosevelt. Its explicit purpose is to mobilize all industry in order to provide material support for Great Britain. The Republican opposition in Congress has denounced the Bill as calling for the abdication of Congress and the establishment of totalitarian rule unprecedented in peace-time. This is the inescapable truth, nor does the Administration attempt to deny it. The supporters of the measure offer the justification that only by such methods can adequate and timely assistance to Britain be forthcoming.

In offering this justification, the Administra-

tion in effect proclaims that the country is actually at war and that it is necessary to set up a wartime regime of totalitarianism to cope successfully with the exigencies of war. Thus, by their acts, the Roosevelt supporters expose the falseness of the words of the false prophets who continue to croak of peace while they prepare for war.

Despite the tremendous build-up that has accompanied its presentation to Congress, the Lend-Lease Bill has provoked a tremendous and far-reaching opposition. The press, which by far and large is in favor of the measure, and the radio, which is subservient to the Administration, have attempted to minimize the extent of the opposition, but it exists nevertheless.

Instinctively the broad masses of people recognize in the bill a long step toward war dictatorship and they shy away from its implications. While it is true that the majority of workers ardently desire a British victory, having been propagandized into believing such a victory as indispensable for future American security, there is a deep seated hope that Great Britain will be able to pull through to victory on the basis of all possible aid from the United States short of war. This explains the seeming contradiction contained in the results of various popular polls which show overwhelming majorities favoring British victory while at the same time strongly opposing American participation in the war.

Expressive of this viewpoint, the *New York Times* while wholeheartedly accepting in principle the objectives of the Lend Lease Bill, voices the pious hope that a formula can be found which will preserve democratic processes without destroying the bill's effectiveness. But the hope is vain, indeed! Effective and timely aid to Great Britain is only possible on the basis of the regimentation of the nation's economy and manpower which underlies the Lend-Lease Bill.

PHONEY AMENDMENTS

As we go to press the Democratic leadership, in an attempt to placate the opposition, has accepted a number of amendments to the original version of the President's proposal. The chief alteration is a two-year limitation on the President's dictatorial powers granted by the terms of the Bill. In practice this amendment is worthless. If, after the lapse of the two-

year period, the war still continues, there will be an even greater need on the part of American imperialism for such dictatorial powers than exists today. Once the President's power has been entrenched under the widespread terms of the Bill, he will have no difficulty in having his rule extended.

Other amendments accepted by the Administration provide that defense articles shall not be disposed of until after consultation with Army and Navy heads, that the President shall report operations under the Bill to Congress every 90 days unless he deems it incompatible with the public interest, and that American Naval vessels shall not be used to convoy merchant ships. These amendments are even more meaningless, if possible, than the two-year limitation on the presidential powers, when considered from the standpoint of shearing the Bill of its grant of unlimited dictatorial powers.

There is little prospect that the opposition of the masses to the dictatorial grants of power to President Roosevelt will be heeded by the capitalist politicians who are stumbling over each other in their anxiety to aid Britain. At the present writing there is every indication that the Bill will be finally adopted by both branches of Congress substantially as it was originally submitted.

HOW TO FIGHT DICTATORSHIP

There is only one way in which the dangers of totalitarian dictatorship which are implicit in the Lend-Lease Bill can be dispelled. The workers of the country must break decisively with the capitalist-sponsored concepts of National "Defense" and "National Unity" which have today reduced them to the status of cogs in the imperialist war machine.

The workers must realize that international capitalism is incapable of, nor can it be trusted to wage a principled struggle against Fascism. The workers must prepare to take over for themselves the struggle against Fascism and wage it on the lofty basis of international working class solidarity. This means that they must organize now to abolish the dying capitalist system which, in its death throes, has given forth the stinking Fascist excrement.

The Lend-Lease Bill is only another in the chain of measures which American capitalism has imposed in its steady march toward Fascist enslavement of the working class. To halt that march the working class must act now,

War, Socialist Party, Norman Thomas

There are increasing signs that the down-right bourgeois pacifism of Norman Thomas and *The Call*, official organ of the Socialist Party, is becoming irksome to the revolutionary elements within the Socialist Party and its youth auxiliary, the Young People's Socialist League. In a recent editorial, "Socialists and the War" [January 4, 1941], *The Call*, under the pretext that "honest confusion" exists as to just what the Socialist Party's war position is, attempts to restate that position.

Says the editorial: "Though we do not expect to 'enlighten' the people who consciously misrepresent our attitude on the war and the various issues arising out of it, we think there is enough confusion on this subject to warrant a few words of clarification at this time." On one or two recent occasions LABOR POWER has called attention to the peculiar gyrations taken by the spokesmen for the Socialist Party, particularly Norman Thomas, on this decisive question. We flatter ourselves that the interest shown by certain members of the Socialist Party in our criticism has also been reflected internally, and that *The Call's* editorial may well be intended as an attempted reply to the charges made by us. Be that as it may, the war issue is without a doubt the burning issue of the hour, the one fraught with the gravest significance for the working class and for the Socialist movement as a whole. It deserves the fullest and frankest discussion and clarification.

SOCIALISM VERSUS PACIFISM

In our attack on the Norman Thomas-*Call* war position, the Socialist Union Party has branded it as essentially a disguised form of bourgeois pacifism, having nothing in common with the revolutionary Socialist position. This charge has evidently struck its mark, for *The Call* is at pains to state that "The Socialist attitude toward the war and toward the issues which arise out of it flow from SOCIALIST, not 'isolationist' or 'pacifist' premises." The real question, however, still remains: what IS the Socialist position toward war, and how closely do Norman Thomas, the Socialist Party and *The Call* adhere to that position? To answer this, we must briefly review some basic principles.

Nowadays the recognition of the fact that modern wars are the product of imperialist

rivalries and the struggle for markets, and sources of raw materials is no longer the exclusive possession of the Socialist movement. Among others, bourgeois pacifism accepts and repeats this truism. So, when *The Call* and Norman Thomas vigorously attack the war and call attention to its imperialist character, their attitude is not in itself exclusively Socialist.

The Socialist position goes much deeper. The basic difference between Socialism and pacifism lies in the fact that Socialists point out that as long as capitalism is permitted to exist, wars are inevitable; peace can only be achieved by abolishing capitalism and replacing it with the Socialist Republic. Pacifists, on the other hand, hold that it is quite possible to attain real and lasting peace without any fundamental change in the existing social order.

Proceeding from its premise that peace is possible under capitalism, pacifism favors and works for a negotiated "just" peace to put an end to the present war. How do the Socialist Party and its official spokesmen react to this move? Do they, proceeding from the logic of the revolutionary Socialist position, point out the utopian nature of such a demand? Do they draw the attention of the workers to the danger it holds for them insofar as it creates false illusions that peace is possible? Do they make it clear that in the present era of capitalist degeneration there can be NO peace, let alone a "just" peace, short of the overthrow of the capitalist class which alone profits by the war, or that any so-called peace that may temporarily be effected by reason of the exhaustion of one of the contending rivals will only be an armed truce? A glance at the contents of *The Call*, a check of the speeches of Norman Thomas will demonstrate that they hold no such views!

Thomas and *The Call* support the pacifist illusion of a "just" peace under capitalism. Thomas is a member of, and a leading spokesman for the pacifist Keep America Out of War Congress, which the Socialist Party has officially endorsed. *The Call's* editor, realizing that such support is inconsistent with professions to a Socialist position, attempts to find an excuse for this collaboration on the ground that its co-operation is limited to "certain immediate anti-war objectives." But one cannot eat his cake and have it, too. If the Socialist

Party's attitude toward the war flows solely from Socialist premises, as *The Call* attempts to make its readers believe, it cannot go over into the camp of pacifism and adopt its program under the guise of limited "immediate anti-war objectives" without at the same time abandoning those very Socialist principles it purports to uphold.

SOCIALISM AND NATIONAL DEFENSE

Equally repugnant to Socialism is the expressed attitude of the Socialist Party on the question of national "defense." Revolutionary Socialism holds that the capitalist state is the deadly enemy of the working class and that the workers have no stake to defend under capitalism. Revolutionary Socialism teaches that under no circumstance is it permissible for a Socialist to co-operate in capitalist national defense. What is the position of Norman Thomas, chief spokesman for the Socialist Party? Thomas is on record as favoring United States participation in Western Hemisphere "Defense" to protect "*our common interests*." He also favors "efficient" and adequate national "defense" of the capitalist state. These views were set forth in Thomas's proposed program for the Anti-War Emergency Mobilization, held at Washington, D. C. in June, 1940. They were uttered in his official capacity as National Chairman of the Socialist Party. By its failure to criticize these proposals, *The Call* endorsed and approved this program for the defense of the interests of U. S. imperialism in the Western Hemisphere. Yet this same *Call* would have its readers believe that it is pursuing a Socialist policy on War!

S. P. BACKS BRITISH SOCIAL-PATRIOTS

Socialism postulates that both camps of imperialism share equal and joint responsibility for the causes as well as the consequences of the present war. A victory for either camp must result in the fascist enslavement of the working class, inasmuch as capitalism can no longer afford to continue its class exploitation through democratic forms. This premise is denied by Social-Democratic and liberal apologists for capitalism, who contend that a victory for British-American imperialism would constitute a "lesser evil" to a German victory.

Consequently, they hold, the working class should work for a British-American victory. *The Call* and Norman Thomas deny the Socialist premise but accept that of the Social-patriots and defenders of imperialism, although they shy away from accepting its logical conclusion—American intervention in the war.

Attempting to rationalize this patent inconsistency between its stand of preferring a British victory over German Fascism while at the same time opposing American intervention which alone can assure such a victory, *The Call* leans on the thesis of the prominent British social-patriot, Harold J. Laski, who maintains in his latest book "Where Do We Go From Here" that the British labor movement, by its support of British imperialism, is thereby strengthening its forces and laying the groundwork for a "revolutionary" Britain which will defeat Hitler by means of a European social revolution.

"We believe he is right," states *The Call*, "And we believe that with its powerful labor movement, its small and weakened ruling class, its growing popular adjustment to quick and radical changes in war-time, this transformation could be accomplished in Britain far more easily now than in normal times of peace." On the other hand, the editorial continues, if America enters the war, the hand of the British ruling class could be enormously strengthened, "could no longer be dependent upon the support of the British workers and therefore "The impetus toward revolutionary change in Britain would be stopped in its tracks."

SOCIALIST BRITAIN A MYTH

Apparently the Socialist Party spokesmen have been hooked by the bunk peddled zealously by British propagandists in America to the effect that Britain is undergoing "revolutionary" social changes which will lead to a Socialist Britain after the war. Not a scintilla of fact exists to back up this view. If anything, the position of the working class has steadily deteriorated since the entrance of Britain into the war. Under the leadership of the British Labor Party the workers have given up their right to strike, have been ordered to remain at their present jobs, no matter what unsatisfactory conditions may exist, have been registered for assignment by the state to any job it may wish done. The Stalinist London *Daily Worker* has been suppressed and the revolutionary

press muzzled. If these conditions point to a march toward Socialism then the American workers already have reached it! The truth is that this story is utter nonsense. The British ruling class, needing the co-operation of the workers in order to carry on the struggle against its German rival, has been filling their ears with flattery and promises of future concessions while at the same time they take away the workers' rights one after another! Yet Norman Thomas and *The Call* think a British victory desirable!

Now, more than ever before, is it necessary to tell the workers the plain truth about what is. Yet we find *The Call* repeating every capitalist fairy tale manufactured to delude the workers. Nothing could be further from the truth, for example, than the story that the British trade union leadership are working for a revolutionary Britain. These bureaucrats are no more interested in a Socialist transformation of society than are Green, Lewis, Murray or the rest of the A. F. of L. and C.I.O. labor misleaders. Even the victory of the Labor Party and its elevation to the control of the government would only mean another Popular Front regime such as Blum's in France. Like the Blum government, the first concern of the Labor Party would be the preservation of the capitalist system of exploitation, and the protection of the imperialist interests of the British ruling class.

SOCIAL-PEACE BOLSTERS IMPERIALISM

Nor is the fatuous belief that the British ruling class is being weakened supported by any evidence. On the contrary, far from being weakened as a result of the war and labor's participation, British capitalism is in a much

stronger position today than it has been for many years. Thanks to the efforts of the British labor leaders, who have succeeded in establishing "social peace" or "national unity" to a great extent, the entrenched ruling class finds that it now has the support of the masses who have been deluded into believing that Great Britain is fighting this war for democracy and against fascism. The class struggle is at its lowest ebb. Labor has virtually disarmed itself, voluntarily surrendering its rights. If all this makes the British ruling class weak, just what does *The Call* believe would make it strong?

In aligning itself with Professor Laski, *The Call* is indirectly endorsing the action of the British labor movement in supporting the British ruling class in the imperialist war. The logic of this position is that if a British victory is desirable, American intervention to assure that victory is likewise desirable. That *The Call* refuses to act consistently with its premises only proves the existence of the confusion which is now tearing the Socialist Party apart. The faction which even now is fighting Norman Thomas and his supporters in favor of a declaration of support for Britain in reality is consistently applying the logic of the arguments made by *The Call*.

At any rate it should now be clear that the contention of the S. P. organ that it is following a Socialist policy on war is not in keeping with the facts. Since *The Call* professes to speak as an organ of Socialism, in the interests of the working class, it owes its readers and the Socialist movement the duty of reconciling its action of repudiating the Socialist policy on war with its profession of adhering to that policy. Is it asking too much of *The Call's* editor to reply?

Is British Imperialism "Lesser" Evil?

Social Democrats who are urging the workers to support British imperialism in the current war may be roughly classified in two categories. First, we find those who no longer maintain that there is a class struggle raging between the working class and the capitalist class, but insist instead that capitalist democracy is waging a progressive struggle against fascist re-

action. This group is by far the more numerous. The second category consists of those who retain the shell of Marxism and repeat its phrases, but manage to empty it of all its revolutionary content. After a thorough exposition of how corrupt both cliques of imperialist bandits are, they nevertheless manage to wind up by finding some rationalization to explain why

the workers must support one set of thieves in its struggles against the other.

In the First World War the working class was astounded and disgusted by the spectacle of the Social Democrats of almost every nation turning to the support of their own bourgeoisie on the flimsiest of excuses. In Germany, the majority of the Social Democracy voted the war credits on the plea that it was necessary to preserve the "magnificent" gains which the German labor movement had made since 1870 from the crushing repression which a victory of reactionary Russia would be certain to bring in its wake. In Russia, on the other hand, P'echanoff hastened to call for a defeat of Germany, since a victory of the Kaiser would mean the preservation of Czarism, while a Russian victory would, in some unexplained manner, lead to its overthrow! At the very moment they were betraying the revolution these social patriots were "explaining" to the workers how their treachery would in fact advance the struggle for Socialism. So it went in every warring nation, with the Social Democrats inevitably finding their way to the side of the ruling class. In the Second World War this process is again under way!

INGENIOUS SOCIAL PATRIOTISM

One of the most ingenious of those in the second category of Social Democrats, those whose arguments amount to pleas of confession and avoidance, is Professor Oskar Lange, who has achieved a considerable reputation in bourgeois circles as a "Marxist" and whose article "The Socialist Attitude Toward the War," appeared in the Summer, 1940 issue of the *Modern Quarterly*. Unlike the general run of social patriots, Lange attempts to fit his support of British imperialism into the framework of Marxism and the principles of class struggle.

The war is a conflict between rival imperialisms, Lange concedes, but "it is a conflict between an imperialism in retreat and an imperialism in full force of expansion. On this ground alone the outcome of the struggle cannot be irrelevant to the Socialist movement." Ergo, the workers must aid the dying imperialism's struggle for survival against its rising foe!

But Mr. Lange's analysis of the differences between British and German imperialism, from which he draws his conclusions politically, is fundamentally false. Let us examine it care-

fully for it provides an original theoretical cover with "Marxist" coloration for the widespread political policy of supporting British imperialism as the "lesser" evil.

Says the writer:

There is a fundamental difference between British and French imperialism and German imperialism. The first is saturated and disintegrating, the second is vigorous and aggressive. The war will only strengthen the centrifugal tendencies of the first, but a German victory would establish the rule of a young and vigorous imperialism much more oppressive and stable than the old one. That German imperialism would be more oppressive as compared to the restricted, but nonetheless important liberties of political and economic organization left to the native peoples, e. g., in British India. That it would be more stable follows from the economic differences between liberal capitalist imperialism and Fascist imperialism. The imperialism of liberal capitalist nations is based on export of capital (induced by higher profits) and leads to the industrialization of the colonies, thus preparing the social forces leading to emancipation. Fascist imperialism is not moved by the quest for private profit but is part of the totalitarian state economy. It, therefore, does not aid the economic development of the subject people but merely exploits their natural and agricultural resources. Without giving to the subject people the benefits of industrialization, it transforms their economy into a permanent 'hinterland' of exploitable material and human resources. Thus Fascist imperialism is akin rather to the colonial policy of the Mercantilist period. There is no tendency in it to prepare the emancipation of the colonies but only to make their subjection perpetual."

STRANGE LOGIC

The very reasoning that Lange employs overthrows his position. He infers that a victory for Nazi imperialism will make more difficult, if not impossible, the struggle of the proletariat for emancipation, whereas a British victory will "weaken" British imperialism and thereby strengthen the working class in its struggle.

This is strange logic indeed. Insofar as British imperialism is weak and disintegrating, its military victory will mean renewed vigor and strength. Basically the weakness of British

imperialism is caused by the operation of the innate laws of capitalist production. But this condition has been aggravated to a considerable extent by the growing inroads made on its imperialist preserves by German and Japanese imperialism. Once these rivals are eliminated, British imperialism will take on a new lease on life. In all history there is not a single case of a nation being weakened by a military victory and the destruction of a deadly rival. Yet Lange asks the workers to help insure a military victory for Britain on the specious ground that such a victory will speed the disintegration of the British Empire!

Not only is Lange's reasoning fallacious from beginning to end, but his analysis is filled with misconceptions, half-truths and outright untruths. Is British imperialism "saturated and disintegrating," while German imperialism is "vigorous and aggressive"? The fact is that *all* capitalism is disintegrating in the face of the disappearance of all possibility of finding new world markets. German imperialism is merely trying to prevent its own ruling class from collapsing by trying to extend its economic dominions to the rest of the world.

As for the permanence and stability of a German victory, Lange argues that this will come about by reason of the fact that German exploitation of the nations it conquers will rob them of their industries and turn them into agricultural and mineral supply houses for German industry. That this is Hitler's aim is quite true, but that it will bring stability to his rule does not follow at all. The more territory he dominates by force of arms, the more industry he breaks down in order to turn the conquered nations into agricultural suppliers, the more unstable becomes his own rule, since the forces of internal revolt are given impetus with each successive step.

SOCIAL BASIS OF NAZISM

Lange has utterly failed to indicate the social background behind Nazi imperialism. Nazism is the direct and inevitable product of decadent world capitalism, and not an invention of the devil or of evil forces. "Export or burst," the political aphorism formulated by Hitler, is in fact a fundamental law of all capitalist imperialism. From the very first, capitalism has been faced with this un-

solvable contradiction: increasing productivity of labor and consequently increasing surpluses of commodities on the one hand, and on the other a definite limit to world markets available for the disposal of these surpluses. In the early days of capitalism, with a whole world yet unopened to capitalist trade, this contradiction could be resolved by imperialist expansion, but by the beginning of this century the capitalist world had reached an impasse which was only broken by the First World Imperialist War.

The results of the First World War were inconclusive. Although Germany was conquered, it was not destroyed. France was prepared to finish her off, but this did not at all suit the purposes of Great Britain, which feared an all-powerful French rival on the continent.

Subsequently, subsidized by American and British finance capital, German capitalism was able to raise its head again and challenge British imperialist supremacy anew. A resurgent Germany made inevitable the renewal of the imperialist holocaust of 1914-18. Hitler is merely the sinister agent who is carrying out German capitalism's "destiny." Nor will this war end with any compromise or half-measures toward the vanquished. The Nazi imperialists have learned the lesson that there is only one way out of the dilemma of increasing production and contradicting markets—the wholesale and relentless destruction of all industrial rivals by the roots. That is the basis of the Nazi "New Order."

BRITISH VICTORY FATAL TOO

How do matters stand with the "liberal" British imperialism which Lange sets up as the "lesser" evil? Lange proceeds from the assumption, common to all social patriots, that British imperialism, in the event it is victorious, has not only the will but the ability to continue on after the war unaffected in its social and political makeup by the repercussions of the bloody struggle. Is this possible? For one thing, as has been repeatedly pointed out in the columns of *LABOR POWER*, a British victory could only come as the result of a long drawn out war of attrition which would completely bankrupt British capitalism, whose financial resources are even now near to exhaustion. An invasion of Britain, even if it is beaten back, will spread

ruin and desolation in its wake.

The working class would be called upon to shoulder the burden of reconstruction, by making greater and greater sacrifices in the "common interest." With the end of the war in a British victory, the sugar-coated slogan of "fighting Hitlerism" which makes these available. Faced with an aroused working sacrifices palatable today will no longer be class which finds that it has been betrayed by false promises of a new social order as its reward for destroying Hitlerism, the British ruling class, in order to keep the workers in check and safeguard its rule, will not hesitate to continue and extend the totalitarian regime that it has set up for the conduct of the war.

In addition, it must be emphasized that British imperialism is no more immune than Nazi imperialism to the effects of the operation of the fundamental laws of capitalist production. In the event of its victory, Great Britain would still be confronted with the problem of increasing surpluses and diminishing markets. This time the "leniency" of the Versailles peace, i.e., the failure utterly to destroy Germany as an industrial competitor, will not be repeated.

British imperialism as well as Nazi imperialism has learned the salient lessons of the last war. Already the demand has been raised in influential ruling class circles in Britain that this time Germany must be really destroyed. There must be no possibility of a resurgent Germany rising to plunge a long suffering world into a third world war. Germany's wings must be clipped. This can only mean (and is so intended) the destruction of Germany as an industrial power which is at the bottom of its military supremacy.

In his conclusion Lange proceeds to completely demolish his own thesis. He concedes that the war aims of the British ruling class are completely reactionary and that it is determined to nip in the bud any attempt at proletarian revolution on the continent. He proceeds to warn the British Socialists to be on guard against any attempt on the part of British imperialism to "betray" the struggle against "Hitlerism." In such an event, he calls upon the British Socialists to urge the workers to revolt to insure the simultaneous defeat of both enemies. A fine sounding

program indeed, but as bankrupt politically as the entire social democracy!

SOCIALISM OR SLAVERY!

Only inexperienced or unthinking workers will be taken in by Lange's revolutionary phrases. As a practical political policy the course he proposes is sheer tommyrot. First, the British workers are urged to abandon the path of the class struggle and co-operate with British imperialism in its struggle against Hitler. The political effect of this initial step is to disarm the working class and weaken it immeasurably, while at the same time strengthening the capitalist system and the capitalist state. This policy of "civil peace" or "national unity" has already enabled the British rulers to set up a totalitarian regime which daily becomes more onerous.

Then, after having succeeded in disarming the workers and betraying them into the hands of their exploiters, the social-patriots of the Lange type call upon the working class to revolt and overthrow their own ruling class! But unfortunately it takes more than revolutionary phrases to seize political power. A working class betrayed and tied to the chariot of the capitalist war machine is very weak revolutionary material.

All history teaches us that military defeats invariably weaken, while military victories strengthen an existing regime. History likewise teaches us that no ruling class ever voluntarily surrendered its class privileges. Yet Mr. Lange, while conceding that the British government is not to be trusted and is prepared to play the role of hangman of the proletarian revolution, nevertheless urges the working class to embrace the cause of British imperialism and work for its military victory.

Under the deep emotional stress engendered by overbearing hatred of Hitlerism and Fascism, many misguided workers have permitted themselves the weakness of abandoning the principled position of the class struggle and of the international solidarity of the working class. They have fallen into the capitalist trap of the "lesser" evil. To these workers we are bound to say: Abominable as is Fascism and all its works, they can be destroyed only by striking at its roots, i.e., by the overthrow of capitalism all over the earth. They cannot be destroyed by an alliance with the forces which brought them into being!

THERE MUST BE NO HALT!

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dinned into his ears from all sides, merely contrasts the existing political and economic despotism of the totalitarian countries with the comparative freedom in the capitalist democracies today and concludes that the whole struggle is—as he is methodically told—that of two opposing forces, dictatorships versus democracy.

In view of the foregoing, the question has arisen in some minds, "Would it not be advisable, in view of conditions, to cease all Socialist activity and await more propitious circumstances for a renewal of revolutionary agitation and activity?"

To this question, my reply is, emphatically, "No!"

The revolutionary Socialist movement exists as the conscious expression of the class struggle which rages in modern society between the capitalist class and the workers. This struggle, as is well known, manifests itself in many ways, such as strikes, lockouts, boycotts, etc. in countries where capitalist democracy exists, and in the various forms of sabotage and illegal activity in the countries where totalitarianism or dictatorship bars labor's freedom to act openly.

SOCIALIST SCIENCE CONFIRMED

The revolutionist has seen the truth of his theory proven by the existence today of the social conditions which he foretold. Capitalism has long since passed the peak of its expansion and now shows unmistakable signs of retrogression, as manifested by the continuously falling rate of profit in industry, the inability of the capitalist class to invest its surplus wealth in growing or new enterprise on the one hand, and on the other the growing number of the permanently unemployed and the progressive pauperization of the workers engaged in the production of the wealth of society.

The revolutionist knows that the various national capitalisms are in constant competition with each other for spheres of influence, i.e., industrially undeveloped countries which are sources of raw materials for modern production, markets for the products of developed capitalist nations, or places where cheap commodities may be created. This competition, which is industrial warfare, inevitably breaks out into military conflict eventually. The

present war is nothing more nor less than a struggle between competing imperialist nations, despite all the attempts to camouflage it as a struggle of democracy versus fascism.

"DEMOCRACIES" WOO FASCISTS

The record of the Allied "democracies" is irrefutable proof of our contention. The "democratic" Allies have, in succession, [1] abandoned the Ruhr, Danzig and the Polish Corridor to the Nazis; [2] allowed Hitler to seize Austria; [3] violated their sacred pledges by abandoning "democratic" capitalist Czechoslovakia to the tender mercies of Nazidom; [4] refused aid to the Spanish democracy while Germany and Italy aided the dictator Franco to re-establish a dictatorship patterned after the fascist model; [5] declared war on Germany when the latter invaded Poland, overthrew the existing brutal dictatorship and established its own; [6] repeatedly sought to buy off the Italian fascist regime from entering the war against them by promising territorial and other concessions; [7] tried to buy off the dictatorships of Rumania, Hungary and Yugoslavia to remain neutral or join them in the war against the axis; [8] allied themselves to the bloody Greek dictatorship of Metaxas, which is now engaged in fighting to decide which dictatorship shall rule Greece and Albania; [9] are attempting even now to secure the aid of the dictatorships of Russia and Turkey in their war against the Axis.

The revolutionist knows full well that Britain cannot subdue the totalitarian nations without the tremendous material assistance that the U. S. alone can supply. This country will sooner or later enter the war, whereupon our democratic rights, already beginning to disappear, will vanish completely—with labor the chief victim.

The revolutionist knows that the workers of Europe have, in succession, followed and been betrayed by the Social Democracy and the Communist Parties, and that their terrible plight today is the result of their own failure to act correctly in their own behalf. Their only hope lies in great mass uprisings that will overthrow their oppressors and leave them free to build a new Socialist society. This is a prodigious task that must be begun in great secrecy by the few who may become martyrs. The forerunners of this movement have already appeared in Germany and Italy, and although

CLASS STRUGGLE CARRIES ON

hounded by the secret police, will continue their efforts until they have won over the workers to action against fascism!

In this country the S. P. and the C. P. have each in turn had their innings, at one time influencing large numbers of workers. Both are today completely discredited in working class circles. We have always been frankly contemptuous of the means resorted to by these organizations to gain supporters, and of the quality of those recruits. Time has proven our estimate correct. But though we were right, we can gain no consolation from the wholesale desertions from these organizations by these alleged revolutionists, for our own cause has not gained therefrom. Nor is there the slightest sign of the awakening of the working class to the gravity of the situation that confronts it. Quite the contrary. The workers are for the present securely wedded to the defense of American capitalism and are plainly antagonistic to revolutionary propaganda.

But the class struggle, which persists everywhere, can end in only one way—when the working class takes matters into its own hands and sets up the Socialist Industrial Republic. Until that time the capitalist class will by force attempt to subdue the workers and impose some form of fascism on society. The Socialist is dedicated to the struggle for working class victory no matter through what vicissitudes society may pass.

Events in the rest of the world will have their reaction on this country in the impending struggle for control of society. Because of its geographic position and its great productive capacity, this country is today dominant and because Europe is at present engaged solely in destruction, promises in the immediate future to be increasingly predominant in world affairs. And because the brain and brawn of the American working class makes that predominant position possible, not only its own fate, but that of the working class of the whole world lies in its hands.

ONLY SLAVES SHIRK STRUGGLE

Voluntarily to leave the field and abandon all effort to awaken the working class to the real situation is to leave them to stagger from defeat to defeat to eventual subjection. It means not only the desertion of the principles and ideals of Socialism; it means abandonment of all civilization, mankind itself, to the de-

structive barbarism now threatening. It means treason to one's self, and one's loved ones. It means looking forward only to hopelessness and despair. No revolutionist worthy of the name can contemplate this without the feeling of righteous indignation taking hold of him, without the desire to fight on, come what may.

Without losing sight even for a moment of the magnitude of the task confronting us, of the comparatively small resources at our command and of the personal risk involved, we must answer the question, "Would it not be advisable, in view of conditions, to await more propitious circumstances for a renewal of revolutionary Socialist propaganda?" with an emphatic "No!" Not only should we not cease our activity, but every party member should resolve to propagate for Socialism on each and every occasion possible in personal contact and otherwise. More intensified and better propaganda is the need of the hour.

The genuine revolutionist, unshakeably and irrevocably convinced that further human progress is indissolubly bound up with the establishment of Socialism, carries on in the hope that somewhere the seed he planted will bear fruit. And if we fail, if the workers fail to act in their own behalf, the revolutionist will find life worthless and hopeless in a world where science, art, literature and music exist only for the oppressors; where for him and his kind there are only physical and mental slavery. He would think back, longing again for the days when he abandoned his task and of the opportunities he missed.

The genuine revolutionist knows not the words "quit" or "defeat." Those who, for any reason, still feel the task is hopeless, should sever their connection with the movement—that those who remain may carry on unhindered by defeatism. As James Russell Lowell so succinctly put it:

"They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak;
They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing and abuse
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth we needs must think;
*They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three!*"

Yours for the Socialist Revolution.

—J. J. D.

NOTE:—We have extracted the above from a lengthy letter submitted, which could not be printed in its entirety because of space limitations, and which, because of its nature, it was inadvisable to reproduce serially.

—THE EDITOR.